



Speech by

Aidan McLindon

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

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MAROON STATE SCHOOL; MORAN, MR K AND WALSH, MR J

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (10.43 pm): Those who have visited the Beaudesert region in the past few years will understand that it produces some of the finest wines in Queensland and that it also boasts some of the most scenic parts of this state. Unfortunately, over the past few years, when it comes to government funding, the old Beauie region has drawn the short straw. Quite honestly, I am sick and tired of it.

The maternity ward was closed down in 2001 and we are left with 800 mothers who are stranded and pushed to the Logan Hospital and the Ipswich Hospital. The passenger rail faded out in 1996. Now we have one bus service—the 540—that leaves Beaudesert at 6.10 am to plug into the Browns Plains service. I remind members that Beaudesert is the second fastest growing region in Queensland and that it is being neglected completely on all fronts.

To rub salt into the wound, what is happening now? There are 12 schools across the state that are earmarked for viability reports into whether they will continue. Unfortunately, two of those schools fall within the Beaudesert electorate. Tonight I want to highlight specifically the need for the continuation of the Maroon State School, which I attended with parents and citizens last Friday night, 14 August. I congratulate Desley Brassington, the executive director for education in the Moreton East district, who was extremely professional in her conduct and who explained the process to the parents and citizens on that night. I must remind the minister that in the next 18 months a further six students will attend this 14-student school. I recall in his maiden speech the member for Toowoomba North said that he was taught in a school that had some 15 students. So he will understand the importance of small schools in rural and regional Queensland.

How can the government give just 12 weeks notice to a school that is going from strength to strength? I would like to see a cost comparison between shutting down the school and reopening it in two years time after realising that the government has made a mistake and continuing to leave the doors open. This is not just a school; it is a community. There were about 40 or 50 people who attended that school last Friday night. They were past students, parents and citizens. They know that this school is viable.

I ask the minister to come out to the area and see that this is not just a school. It would rip the heart out of this community if the school were to be closed. It does not need a viability report. The school would speak for itself if the minister cared to call the principal to find out that there is going to be continued growth in the region. There will be some 18,000 jobs at Bromelton over the next 10 to 15 years. I certainly think that this is a key school in the area that needs to remain open.

I would also like to acknowledge the passing of two local legends, Ken Moran and Jim Walsh, who were both born in 1925. Ken was bound to a wheelchair after contracting polio at the age of 20. In 1984 he upgraded to an electric wheelchair and all the kids in his street were happy to share in that. I would like to acknowledge those two legends of the Beaudesert region for everything that they contributed, as they were Beauie boys for their entire lives.